

ABSTRACT

The present invention provides a gaming device which enables a player to enter a tournament based on a qualifying outcome achieved on the gaming device. In one embodiment, the gaming device includes a set of reels including at least one qualification symbol. If at least one qualification symbol is displayed within a display device of the gaming device, the player qualifies for a tournament to be played at a later time. The tournament is preferably a slot machine tournament. One or more prizes are awarded at the tournament, including high value items such as cars and motorcycles as well as lower valued items such as hats, T-shirts, jackets, memorabilia and other merchandise. In this regard, the tournament provides convenience to a casino as far as prize acquisition, distribution and record keeping are concerned because prizes are awarded at one specific event instead of on sporadic occasions. The payout percentages of the gaming devices providing entry into the tournament are set relative to a cost of the tournament.